

1-301. PUBLIC AFFAIRS. To foster cooperation and mutual respect between the news media, the community, and the Department, a member of the personal staff of the Chief of Police is designated as the Director of Public Affairs. The services of the Public Affairs Office are made available to authorized representatives of the news media.

1-301.01 POLICY. The Department actively seeks a cooperative environment in which the news media and public may obtain information on matters of public interest in a manner that does not hamper police operations. However, certain information must be withheld from the news media to protect the Constitutional rights of the accused, to avoid interference with investigations, because it is legally privileged or confidential, or because it is exempt from disclosure by law.

1-301.02 PUBLIC AFFAIRS DIVISION. The Public Affairs Division will be responsible for the following special duties:

- A.** Responding to the scene of serious police incidents, whenever practical, to assist news gathering agencies in the performance of their functions.
(CALEA 54.1.1. a)
- B.** Reviewing and releasing all Department press releases. *(CALEA 54.1.1. b)*
- C.** Composing and distributing public service messages to the news media.
(CALEA 54.1.1. c)
- D.** Maintaining a file of all news releases and public service messages to the news media.
- E.** Approving requests from news media to ride in police vehicles for the purpose of gathering information for use in feature stories or articles.
- F.** Providing technical assistance and advice to writers and producers of radio, television, and motion pictures.
- G.** Conducting research and preparing written assignments as directed by the Chief of Police.
- H.** Arranging for formal presentation of all Department awards for employees, private citizens, and promotion ceremonies.
- I.** Coordinating requests from Department personnel for radio and

television public service broadcasts.

- J. Coordinating requests for appearances of the Police Band, Police Choir, and other specialized units.
- K. Providing general information regarding the Department.

1-301.03 RELEASE OF INFORMATION. The scope and content of each release of information must be determined individually. Determination is made by a Public Affairs Officer or by the senior employee at the scene. Generally, a description of circumstances not legally privileged or confidential, which will not prejudice the rights of suspects or interfere with an investigation, will be given.

- A. **Responsibility.** When an event being investigated is of such spectacular or unusual nature as to stimulate general community interest, the news media will be notified. It is normally the responsibility of the Regional Commander, or senior officer at the scene, to address the news media. The Public Affairs Director or Officer may assume responsibility for the release of information when there is an event of major proportions. The Public Affairs Office will be notified of such events through Communications.
- B. **Guidelines for Providing Information.** Due to public expectations and accessibility, employees are called upon to supply information both related and unrelated to law enforcement. Employees will adhere to the following guidelines for providing information:
 1. Appropriately answer questions for general, non-confidential information or refer them to individuals or agencies more capable of answering.
 2. When requests are made for information about police matters, employees will provide information only if they possess sufficient facts, are qualified to respond, and if the person asking is authorized to receive the information.
 3. Employees should generally be forthright in their dealings with the public and should supply requested information except where inappropriate or the law does not allow for the disclosure of the information.
 4. Employees will avoid representing their opinion as fact.
 5. Invitations to appear on television or radio programs must be approved by the Director of Public Affairs. Prior approval is not required, however, for on-the-spot news media interviews.

1-302. CRIME/EMERGENCY SITUATIONS. Although the police and the media both

serve the public, their needs sometimes conflict. These guidelines are established to respond to the needs and problems of both.

1-302.01 INTERFERENCE. Media representatives may not restrict, obstruct or oppose an Officer in the lawful execution of a legal duty. The media's presence and the taking of photographs, video tape, or the asking of questions relative to an incident is **not** unlawful interference and may not be restricted. *(CALEA 54.1.3)*

1-302.02 PUBLIC PROPERTY. Media representatives have the right to photograph and report events which take place on public property.

1-302.03 ACCESS. Media representatives may not be denied access to areas where the public is allowed. However, if the public has been denied access, the media may also be denied access.

1-302.04 CRIME SCENES. Media representatives may be denied access to crime scenes, when necessary, to allow for proper crime scene processing or collection of evidence. The reason for such denial should be explained and access granted as soon as circumstances permit. Officers do not have the authority to grant permission to news media to enter private residences or other facilities, or portions thereof that are not open to the public. *(CALEA 54.1.3)*

1-302.05 RESTRICTIONS. Employees will not restrict the nature of photographs taken or questions asked by the news media. It is the media's obligation to obtain information and solely their responsibility to determine which photos to take, which questions to ask, and which information to provide to the public.

- A.** Media representatives remaining outside an area under police control will not be restricted unless their actions are clearly interfering with an investigation.
- B.** Employees must recognize that the media has the responsibility to collect information about incidents of public interest as quickly as possible. This may require meeting deadlines and collecting information that may seem irrelevant, unimportant, or even improper. When no law is violated and their actions do not affect investigations, Officers will not impede the media.

1-302.06 MEDIA VIOLATING THE LAW. Media representatives are not exempt from the law. When arrested for violating the law, they will be treated in the same manner as any other violator.

1-302.07 PHOTOGRAPHING SUSPECTS. Employees will neither encourage nor discourage the photographing of suspects or defendants when they are in public places.